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A.—Officers whose posts have become superfluous will be provided for elsewhere, if possible. If not, they will be given compensation pensions in cases in which they have more than 10 years' service, and gratuities where they have less.

Presidentship of Landing and Shipping Fees Committees.

653 Q.—Mr. V. HAMID SULTAN MARAKKAYAR: Will the hon. the Member for Finance be pleased to state the reason why deputy collectors and sub-collectors are preferred for the presidentship of the Landing and Shipping Fees Committees, when the Port officers who are in the know of the business proper are available?

A.—The Committees consist largely of merchants and of port officials whose views on questions raised may be widely divergent, and it is considered generally desirable therefore to have as President of the Committee a Revenue Officer who has no direct concern with the questions in issue.

Municipal elections in Negapatam.

654 Q.—Mr. V. P. PAKKIRISWAMI PILLAI: Will the hon. the Minister for Local Self-Government be pleased to state—

(1) the names of the polling officers appointed by the Chairman, Municipal Council, Negapatam, for elections in August 1922;

(2) whether any objections were taken to their appointment, if so, on what grounds;

(3) whether it is a fact that armed police had to patrol the streets on the election day, if so, what necessity there was for such a contingency; and

(4) whether the Government have received any reports from the Collector of Tanjore about irregularities in the election proceedings (especially about the postponement of the election on 8th August 1922 by the Chairman in spite of protest) and if so, whether any action has been taken thereon, and whether the Government will be pleased to lay all the papers on the table?

A.—(1) The following gentlemen were appointed by the Chairman as polling officers for the election held in August 1922:—

(1) M.R.Ry. S. P. K. Somasundaram Pillai Avargal.
(2) „ E. T. S. Kothandapani Pillai Avargal.
(3) „ A. Solomon Royan Chettiyar.
(4) „ R. S. Srinivasalu Nayudu Garu.
(5) Janab V. Hamid Sultan Marakkayar Sahib Bahadur, M.L.C.

(2) One of the candidates for the election, Shaik Muhammad Malim alias Perianna, presented a petition to the Chairman on 3rd August 1922 objecting to the appointment of any of these gentlemen except M.R.Ry. A. Solomon Royan Chettiyar Avargal, as they were either canvassing for himself or for the rival candidate.

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(3) The same candidate presented a petition to the Deputy Superintendent of Police, Negapatam, at 10 p.m. on 8th August 1922 stating that his rival candidate Mr. Singaravelu Chettiyar with the help of the Chairman and a party of 200 fishermen of Negapatam were trying to cause a breach of the peace and requested bandobasth. The Circle Inspector found a crowd loitering in the streets in front of Mr. Singaravelu Chettiyar's house. The Circle Inspector, a Sergeant and the sub-inspectors of Negapatam and Nagore patrolled the town with their men armed on the night of the 8th and unarmed on the morning of the 9th August. There was no disturbance.

(4) The answer to the first part of the question is in the negative. The rest of the question does not arise.

Caste distinction in hostels maintained by Government.

655 *Q.*—Mr. A. T. Palmer: Will the hon. the Minister for Education be pleased to state whether caste distinction is observed in hostels maintained by the Government?

A.—Different classes of the community have different kitchens and dining rooms assigned to them. Otherwise there is no caste distinction.

Absence of district board presidents from India.

656 *Q.*—The Raja of Ramnad: Will the hon. the Minister for Local Self-Government be pleased to state why orders have not been passed with reference to the absence of the President of the Kistna District Board while on deputation in England in connexion with the Indian Students' Advisory Committee and whether the Government have declared that he forfeited his appointment by absence outside the local area under the provisions of the new Local Boards Act; whether the Government have declared or propose to declare that Diwan Bahadur M. Ramachandra Rao forfeited his appointment and what the Government propose to do with regard to the absence on deputation to British Guiana of Diwan Bahadur P. Kesava Pillai, who is the President of the District Board, Anantapur?

A.—The Government are advised that M.R.Ry. Diwan Bahadur M. Ramachandra Rao Pantulu Garu ceased to be a member and President of the District Board of Kistna by his absence from the meetings of that Board for more than three consecutive months. M.R.Ry. Diwan Bahadur P. Kesava Pillai Avargal similarly ceased to be a member and President of the Anantapur District Board.

Rao Bahadur C. V. S. Narasimha Raju:—"Has not Mr. Kesava Pillai taken charge of the district board presidentship, Anantapur, immediately after he returned from British Guiana?"

The hon. the Raja of Panagal:—"There was some doubt as to whether the condonation of his continuance as a member of the District Board, subsequent to his return from British Guiana, was valid. He took charge thinking that the condonation by the District Board was valid."